



BISHOP RAWSTORNE
Church of England Academy

Suspension and Exclusion Policy

'But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere'
James 3:17

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This document and the content contained therein remains the responsibility of the Headteacher, and Governing Body of the Academy. No amendments can be made without their express instruction and they remain the final arbiters in any matters relating to it.

FORTITER ET FIDELITER
Bravely and Faithfully

Bishop Rawstone Church of England Academy Suspension and Exclusions Policy

Verse

“But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.”

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Vision

“Bishop Rawstone Church of England Academy aspires to cultivate wisdom rooted in Christian Values. It is our vision that all members of our community will experience life in all its fullness, flourishing through dignity, knowledge and understanding, bound together in unity, giving hope and worth to all.”

Our Values

Hope, Service, Compassion, Peace, Wisdom, Fellowship.

Our values are taken from the work of Neville Norcross ‘Christian Values for Church Schools’. Whilst there are many Christian values, we have chosen the six above to complement our commitment to a rich curriculum and outstanding pastoral care.

Philosophy

At Bishop Rawstone we recognise there is a need for our school to have very clear expectations of the standards for all. This does mean that upon occasion to hold these standards firm we will need to use the firmer sanctions of suspension and exclusion. Where these sanctions are considered and implemented, it is done in a manner to allow other students to feel safe and continue with their education in the manner that our Vision and Values express. For any young person that is suspended or excluded, this process is handled in a manner that is sensitive to the individual’s needs and always plans for a dignified and respectful return to school following the sanctions implementation.

CODE OF CONDUCT IN OUR CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

Our aim is to ensure that students feel happy, safe and secure in our school.

We believe:

- that every individual in our community is a unique and valuable creation made in the image of God.
- we all have a right to be considered equal, worthy of respect and esteem.
- we all have a responsibility to treat others as we would like to be treated ourselves.

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1. Statement of Intent

At Bishop Rawstone Church of England Academy, we understand that good behaviour and discipline is essential for promoting a high-quality education.

Amongst other disciplinary sanctions, the school recognises that suspension and exclusion of students may be necessary where there has been a serious breach, or consistent breaches, of the school's Behaviour Policy. Suspending or excluding a student may also be required in instances where allowing the student to remain in school would be damaging to the education and welfare of themselves or others; in all cases, suspending or excluding students should only be used as a means of last resort.

The school has created this policy to clearly define the legal responsibilities of the Headteacher, Governing Body and LA when responding to student suspensions and exclusions, to ensure that they are dealt with both fairly and lawfully, and in line with DfE statutory guidance. This policy also aims to secure a student's right to an education despite having been suspended or excluded, by ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place.

A **"suspension"** is defined as the temporary removal of a student from the school for behaviour management purposes. A student may be suspended for one or more fixed periods, up to a maximum of 45 school days in a single academic year. A suspension does not have to be for a continuous period.

An **"exclusion"** is defined as the permanent removal of a student from the school, in response to a serious breach or persistent breaches of the school's Behaviour Policy and where allowing the student to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the students or staff in the school.

2. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Education Act 2002
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Students) (England) Regulations 2007
- Equality Act 2010
- The School Discipline (Student Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012
- The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)

This policy also has due regard to statutory and non-statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2022) 'Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and student referral units in England, including student movement'
- DfE (2022) 'Behaviour in Schools'
- DfE (2015) 'Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years'
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and behaviour in schools'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

3. Roles and responsibilities

- Having due regard to the relevant statutory guidance when carrying out its duties in relation to the education of LAC.
- Arranging suitable full-time education for any student of compulsory school age excluded permanently, in coordination with the school.
- Reviewing and reassessing students' needs in consultation with their parents where they have an EHC plan and are excluded permanently, with a view to identifying a new placement.
- Arranging the hearing without delay at a time, date and venue convenient for all parties.

- Ensuring the independent review panel consists of three or five members as appropriate, which represent the required categories.
- Ensuring all panel members and the clerk have received training within the two years prior to the date of the review.
- If requested by parents, appointing a SEND expert to attend the panel and covering the associated costs of this appointment.

The trust is responsible for:

- Arranging for an independent review panel hearing to review the decision of the Governing Body not to reinstate a permanently excluded student where required.

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- Providing information to the Secretary of State and LA about any suspensions and exclusions within the last 12 months.
- Arranging suitable full-time education for any student of compulsory school age who is suspended for more than 5 days.
- Considering parents' representations about suspensions and exclusions within 15 school days of receiving notice, if the appropriate requirements are met.
- Where a suspension or exclusion would result in a student missing a public examination or test, considering the suspension or exclusion before this date.
- Considering whether it would be appropriate for a student to be permitted onto the school premises to sit the public examination or test.
- Arranging the representation meeting at a time and date convenient to all parties, but in compliance with the statutory time limits.
- Adhering to its responsibilities to consider the reinstatement of students.
- Considering the interests and circumstances of the suspended or excluded student, including the circumstances in which they were suspended or excluded, and have due regard to the interests of others at the school.
- Using the civil standard of proof (based on the 'balance of probabilities', it is more than likely that the fact is true) when establishing the facts relating to a suspension or exclusion.
- Ensuring clear minutes are taken of the representation meeting.
- Noting the outcome of the representation meeting on the student's education record, along with copies of relevant papers for future reference.
- Notifying the student's parents, the Headteacher and the LA of its decision and the reasons for it, without delay.
- Appointing a clerk to provide advice to the relevant panel and parties to the review on procedure, law and statutory guidance on suspensions and exclusions.

- Where appropriate, informing parents of where to apply for an independent review panel.
- Informing parents of relevant sources of information.
- Ensuring a student's name is removed from the school admissions register, where appropriate.
- Reconvening within 10 school days to reconsider reinstatement of a student where directed to do so by the suspensions and exclusions review panel.
- Using data to evaluate the school's practices regarding intervention, suspension and exclusion

The clerk to the suspensions and exclusions review panel is responsible for:

- Informing the appropriate individuals that they are entitled to:
 - Make written representations to the panel.
 - Attend the hearing and make oral representations to the panel.
 - Be represented.
- Circulating copies of relevant papers at least five school days before the review to all parties.
- Giving all parties details of those attending and their role, once the position is clear.
- Attending the review and ensuring that minutes are produced in accordance with instructions from the panel within the timeframe of the policy.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementing good levels of discipline to ensure all students can benefit from the opportunities provided by education and to minimise potential suspensions and exclusions.
- Applying the civil standard of proof when establishing the facts in relation to a suspension or exclusion.
- Complying with their statutory duties in relation to students with SEND when administering the suspension or exclusion process, as outlined in the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy.
- Considering any contributing factors that are identified after an incident of poor behaviour has occurred, e.g. if a student has suffered bereavement, experienced bullying or has a mental health issue.
- Considering the use of a multi-agency assessment for a student who demonstrates persistent disruptive behaviour.
- Reviewing the effectiveness of suspensions and exclusions as sanctions, e.g. if a student has received multiple suspensions or is approaching the legal limit for suspensions in an academic year.

- Considering what extra support may be needed to identify and address the needs of individual students, particularly those with SEND, those eligible for FSM, LAC and those from certain ethnic groups.
- Engaging effectively with parents in supporting the behaviour of students with additional needs.
- Determining whether a student will be suspended or excluded on disciplinary grounds.
- Withdrawing any suspensions or exclusions that have not been reviewed by the Governing Body, where appropriate.
- Ensuring any decision to suspend or exclude is lawful, rational, reasonable, fair and proportionate.
- Complying with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 when deciding whether to suspend or exclude a student.
- Ensuring they have considered their legal duty of care when sending a student home following a suspension or exclusion.
- Making the decision to suspend or exclude based on the evidence available at the time, regardless of any police investigation and/or criminal proceedings.
- Notifying a student's parents without delay where the decision is taken to suspend or exclude the student, including the days on which the parents must ensure the student is not present in a public place at any time during school hours, as well as any other necessary information statutorily required.
- Ensuring that all information provided to parents is clear and easily understood.
- Notifying the governor responsible and LA of their decision to exclude a student where appropriate, as well as the student's home authority if required.
- Notifying the Governing Body once per term of any exclusions in the Headteacher's report to governors.
- Organising suitable work for excluded students where alternative provision cannot be arranged.

4. Grounds for suspension or exclusion

The school will only suspend or exclude a student where it is absolutely necessary, and where all other possible disciplinary sanctions, as detailed in the school's Behaviour Policy, have failed to be successful.

The following **examples** of behaviour **may** warrant the decision to suspend or exclude a student:

- Refusal to follow staff instructions
- Vandalism to property, buildings or school transport
- Persistent disregard for the student code of conduct
- Theft
- Physical assault against a student

- Physical assault against an adult
- Verbal abuse or threatening behaviour against a student
- Verbal abuse or threatening behaviour against an adult
- Possession, use, or threat of use, of an offensive weapon or prohibited item
- Bullying
- Discriminatory abuse, e.g. racist, homophobic, bi-phobic, transphobic or ableist abuse
- Use of a mobile phone in contravention of school rules
- Any other matter deemed serious by the SLT

Students can be suspended on a fixed-period basis, i.e. for up to 45 school days within a year or permanently excluded. We operate an incremental system. This means that where a pupil is involved in repeated serious breaches of the school's behaviour policy, the school will apply a graduated and incremental approach to suspension. Following a first fixed-term suspension (normally 1 day, unless the seriousness of the incident warrants a longer period), any subsequent suspension within a rolling 12-month period is likely to increase in duration. For example, a second suspension may be issued for 2–3 days, and a third suspension for 3–5 days, depending on the nature and severity of the incident. In cases of continued serious misconduct, or where behaviour escalates despite support and intervention, the school may consider a suspension of up to 5 or more days or move to permanent suspension or exclusion, depending on the evidence.

Each suspension will be accompanied by a reintegration meeting and appropriate support measures. As suspensions increase, additional interventions may include a formal behaviour review, a Pastoral Support Plan, involvement of external agencies, or consideration of a managed move. The school will always consider the individual circumstances of the pupil, including safeguarding needs and any special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and ensure that all decisions are lawful, reasonable, and proportionate.

In all cases, the Headteacher will decide whether a student will be subject to a suspension or an exclusion, depending on what the circumstances warrant.

5. The Headteacher's power to suspend and exclude

Only the Headteacher has the power to suspend or exclude a student from the school and is able to decide whether either a suspension or exclusion is appropriate. All suspensions and exclusions will only be issued on disciplinary grounds.

The Headteacher is able to suspend students where their behaviour is disruptive during lunchtime. All lunchtime suspensions will be counted as half of a school day. The Headteacher is also able to consider a student's disruptive behaviour outside of the school premises as grounds for suspension or exclusion, in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy.

When sending a student home, following any suspension or exclusion, the Headteacher will ensure that they exercise their duty of care at all times and parents will be informed.

Any decision made to suspend or exclude a student will be lawful, proportionate and fair, with respect to legislation relating directly to suspensions and exclusions and the school's wider legal duties, including the ECHR. At all times, the Headteacher will take into account their legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the 'Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years', ensuring that they do not discriminate on any grounds, e.g. race, sex, or disability, and will not increase the severity of a student's suspension or exclusion on these grounds.

The Headteacher will apply the civil standard of proof when responding to the facts relating to a suspension or exclusion, i.e. that 'on the balance of probabilities' it is more likely than not that the facts are true.

The Headteacher may cancel any suspension or exclusion that has already begun; however, this power will only be used if the suspension or exclusion has not already been reviewed by the Governing Body. Where a suspension or exclusion is cancelled, the Headteacher will notify the student's parents, the Governing Body, the LA, and, where relevant, the virtual school head (VSH) and the student's social worker. The Headteacher will offer the student's parents the opportunity to meet with the Headteacher to discuss the circumstances that led to the cancellation of the exclusion, and the student will be allowed back into school.

The Headteacher will report the number of suspensions and exclusions that have been cancelled, alongside the circumstances around and reasons for cancellation, to the Governing Body once per term, to allow the Governing Body to have appropriate oversight.

The Headteacher will not issue any 'informal' or 'unofficial' suspensions or exclusions, e.g. sending a student home to 'cool off', regardless of whether the parents have agreed to this. The Headteacher will not use the threat of suspension or exclusion as a means of instructing parents to remove their child from the premises.

Bishop Rawstone works alongside other Chorley schools to offer, where appropriate, respite places for students that have accrued subsequent rapid suspension.

All exclusions will be formally recorded on the student information system (Synergy) and CPOMS if appropriate.

6. Factors to consider when suspending or excluding a student

- Allow the student the opportunity to present their case once evidence has been collected.
- Take into account any contributing factors that are identified after a case of poor behaviour has occurred, e.g. if the student's wellbeing has been compromised, or they have been subjected to bullying.

- Take into consideration whether the student has received multiple suspensions or is approaching the legal limit of 45 suspended days per school year, and whether suspension is serving as an effective sanction.
- Consider early intervention to address underlying causes of disruptive behaviour, including liaising with external agencies, to assess students who demonstrate consistently poor behaviour.
- Consider prior exclusions when determining the length of the exclusion. Bishop Rawstone operates an incremental exclusion system.

The Headteacher will consider what extra support may be available for vulnerable student groups whose suspension and exclusion rates are higher, to reduce their risk of suspension or exclusion, including the following:

- LAC
- Students eligible for FSM
- Students with SEND
- Certain ethnic groups

The Headteacher will consider avoiding excluding LAC, those with SEMH issues or students with an EHC plan. Where any member of staff has concerns about vulnerable student groups and their behaviour, they will report this to the Headteacher, who will instigate a multi-agency assessment to determine whether the behavioural issues might be a result of educational, mental health or other needs and vulnerabilities. The full assessment procedures are outlined in the school's Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy.

Where SEND or SEMH issues are identified, an individual behaviour plan will be created using the graduated response outlined in the school's Behaviour Policy. If the student continues to endanger the physical or emotional wellbeing of other students or staff, despite exhausting the graduated response process, then suspension or exclusion may be considered. In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, we will endeavour not to suspend a student with identified SEND or SEMH issues, unless circumstances deem it necessary.

Where a student with SEND or SEMH issues is excluded because of a SEND- or SEMH-related need, that could not be met at the school, detailed records will be kept highlighting that these students are closely tracked and showing that the school has a close relationship with the student's next destination.

The Headteacher will work in conjunction with the parents of any student with additional needs to establish the most effective support mechanisms.

7. Preventative measures

Before taking a final decision to exclude, the Headteacher will consider whether it is in the best interests of all parties to initiate off-site directions or managed moves as preventative measures to exclusion.

Off-site direction

The board of trustees may use their general powers to arrange for any registered student to attend at any place outside the school premises for the purpose of receiving educational provision intended to improve their behaviour.

The Governing Body and the Headteacher will decide, in communication with the student and their parents, whether off-site direction is an appropriate solution to manage a student's behaviour and avoid suspension or exclusion. Where all parties agree to this course of action, the school will work with the student and their parents to discuss and agree a plan for the off-site direction, including a proposed maximum period of time that the student will be at the alternative provision and any alternative options that will be considered once the time limit has been reached, e.g. managed moves.

The Governing Body will notify parents, and the LA, if the student has an EHC plan, in writing with information about the placement no later than two school days before the relevant day.

The school will keep any off-site placements under review by holding review meetings at intervals deemed appropriate by the Governing Body; the Governing Body will ensure, where possible, that review meetings are convened at a time suitable for the student's parents, and will invite parents in writing to each review meeting no later than six school days before that date. Where parents request, in writing, that the Governing Body hold a review meeting, the Governing Body will arrange review meetings in response, as soon as is reasonably practicable, unless there has been a review meeting in the previous 10 school weeks.

The Governing Body will decide at each review meeting whether the arrangement will continue and for what period of time; the meeting will also decide arrangements for further reviews. Reviews will be recorded in writing, including any decisions made regarding the placement.

Off-site direction and Managed Moves

Off-site direction

There may be occasions where it is considered appropriate for students to spend time at another school. Initially this is an off-site direction. Where interventions or targeted support have not been successful in improving a pupil's behaviour, off-site direction could be used to arrange time-limited placements at an alternative provision or another mainstream school.

It should be recognised that this strategy cannot be used as a means of avoiding a permanent exclusion but merely to provide an alternative solution to improve behaviour.

An off-site direction does not require parental consent; however, it is in the best interests of pupils that all parties work together to ensure a successful outcome.

Criteria / considerations for an off-site direction:

- Off-site direction can be full-time, or a combination of part-time support in alternative provision and mainstream education.
- A proposed maximum time should be discussed and agreed upon as part of the planning phase.
- The student must be dual registered for the period of the off-site direction.
- The governing board must keep the placement under regular review.
- The length of time a student spends in another mainstream school or AP will depend on what best supports the student's needs and potential improvement in behaviour.
- Where a student is directed off-site, the school must ensure that parents are given clear information about the placement. For example, why their child has been directed to off-site provision, when the placement will begin, where the placement will be, and how it will be reviewed.
- Alternative options should be considered once the time limit has been reached, including return to home school or a managed move on a permanent basis.

Process for Off-site Direction

Once a receiving school has been identified a meeting should be arranged by the school with the pupil, parent/carer, relevant staff from each school and any other supporting agency involved. The purpose of the meeting should be to:

- Detail the support to be put in place.
- Agree practical arrangements, such as start date, timetable, uniform.
- Agree dates for regular reviews, ideally fortnightly to ensure a successful transition.
- Explain the steps to be taken should the move be unsuccessful.
- The focus of the meeting should be on the positive, fresh start that the move will provide and the support that will be in place to help the student achieve this.

During the period of the off-site direction, the student will remain on the roll of the home school and the school providing the off-site direction will place the student on their subsidiary roll. Until arrangements are confirmed, the student should continue to attend their home school.

All off-site direction arrangements should be reviewed regularly. During the initial period, nominated members of staff from both schools should take joint responsibility for monitoring levels of support and for making the necessary referrals to services. Every effort should be made to ensure the student completes the period of the off-site

direction. However, if reviews during the initial period determine that the move is unsuccessful, then the student will return to the home school. Examples of when an off-site direction may come to an end earlier than the agreed period of off-site direction include.

- Significant behaviour incident.
- Significant disruption of the whole school learning environment.
- Severe absence and non-engagement with the off-site direction placement.

If a serious behaviour incident occurs whilst the student is attending the off-site provision, the school at which the student is attending **must** contact the main school. If this incident warrants the issuing of a suspension, this will be done by the school the student is attending but will be logged against the main school.

Ideally, the period of the off-site direction should be a half term (6 weeks) with reviews on a fortnightly basis. This can be extended for a further 6 weeks, but a final review **must** take place within 12 weeks of the agreed start date to determine whether the student returns to their home school or a managed move is considered (see below).

What is a Managed Move?

A managed move is used to initiate a process which leads to the transfer of a student to another mainstream school **permanently**. Managed moves are voluntary and must be agreed with all parties involved and should only occur when it is in the student's best interests.

Parents / carers have the right to apply for a school place at any time and do not have to participate in a managed move.

When to Consider a Managed Move

Any managed move should be preceded by information sharing between the home school and the new school. Data on prior and current attainment, academic potential, a risk assessment (if appropriate) and advice on effective behaviour management strategies should be shared. It is also important for the new school to ensure that the student is provided with an effective integration plan. It may be that the pupil has already attended the new school for a period of off-site direction, therefore this information should already have been shared.

Managed moves should be offered as part of a planned intervention. The original school should be able to evidence that appropriate initial intervention has been carried out, including, where relevant, multi-agency support, or any statutory assessments were done or explored prior to a managed move.

Headteachers may consider a managed move as a response to a serious breach of the school's behaviour policy, for example, a one-off, out of character incident.

A managed move is not appropriate for managing persistent absence nor is it a correct process to use where a parent is seeking a straightforward transfer to another school.

Criteria / Considerations for a Managed Move

- A managed move is used to initiate the transfer of a child from one mainstream school to another mainstream school permanently and involves a move from the home school's admission register to the admission register of the new school.
- Managed moves should be voluntary and agreed with all parties involved. If a temporary move needs to occur to improve a student's behaviour, then off-site direction should be used.
- Managed moves should only occur when it is in the student's best interests.
- Managed moves should be offered as part of a planned intervention.
- The managed move should be preceded by information sharing between the original school and the new school.
- A parent must not feel pressured into agreeing to a managed move as this is considered off-rolling and is unlawful.

Process for a Managed Move

A headteacher can refuse a request to take a student as part of a managed move, as these are arrangements made between the schools with the agreement of all parties including parents.

Both schools will need to discuss and agree the conditions of the move taking into account what is best for the child, before agreements are finalised including:

- Timing of the move.
- Induction to the new school.
- Once everything is finalised and the student is single registered at the new school and therefore been permanently added to the admission register, any serious breach of the behaviour policy would be dealt with in line with the new school's behaviour policy and could lead to a permanent exclusion.

A managed move can be undertaken following a period of off-site direction. If, following a review of the off-site direction, it is agreed that it is in the best interest of the child, a managed move can take place and the child's name can be removed from the admission register of their home school.

8. Duty to inform the Governing Body and LA

The Headteacher will inform the Governing Body, without delay, of the following:

- Any permanent exclusions (including where a suspension is followed by a decision to permanently exclude the student).
- Any suspensions which would result in the student being suspended for more than 5 school days in a term (or more than 10 lunchtimes).
- Any suspensions or exclusions which would result in the student being absent from an examination or national curriculum test.

For any suspensions and exclusions, other than those above, the Headteacher will notify the Governing Body once per term.

The Headteacher will inform the LA of all suspensions or exclusions, regardless of their length, without delay.

All notifications to the Governing Body and LA will include the reasons for suspension or exclusion and the duration of any suspension.

If a student, who is suspended or excluded, lives outside the LA in which the school is located, the Headteacher will notify the student's 'home authority'.

9. Duty to inform social workers and the virtual school head (VSH)

When a student has been suspended or excluded, the Headteacher will, without delay, notify the student's social worker, if they have one, and the VSH, if they are a looked-after child. This notification will include the period of any suspension and the reasons for suspension or permanent exclusion.

Social workers and/or the VSH will also be informed when a meeting of the Governing Body is taking place and will be invited to attend the meeting should they wish to do so.

10. Arranging education for suspended and excluded students

For any suspensions of more than five school days, the Governing Body will arrange suitable full-time education for the student, which will begin no later than the sixth day of suspension. Where a student receives consecutive suspensions, these will be regarded as cumulative, and full-time education will still have to be provided from the sixth day of suspension. For exclusions, full-time education will be provided for the student from the sixth day of exclusion.

The Governing Body will not arrange full-time education for any student who is currently in their final year of compulsory education, and who does not have any further public examinations to sit.

The Governing Body is aware that it is beneficial, to suspended and excluded students, to begin their alternative education arrangements before the sixth day of suspension or exclusion; therefore, the Governing Body will always attempt to arrange alternative provision before the sixth day. Where it is not possible to arrange alternative provision during the first five days, the school will ensure that they take reasonable steps to set work for the student.

If a student with SEND has been suspended or excluded, the Governing Body will ensure that:

- Any alternative provision is arranged in consultation with the student's parents, who are able to request preferences.
- When identifying alternative provision, any EHC plan is reviewed or the student's needs are reassessed, in consultation with the student's parents.

11. Considering suspensions and exclusions

The Governing Body will consider any representations made by parents regarding suspensions and exclusions.

Parents and, where requested, a friend or representative, the Headteacher, and a member of the LA will be invited to attend any consideration of suspensions and exclusions and will be able to make representations. Any meeting to consider reinstatement of a student will be arranged at a date and time convenient for all parties, and in compliance with any statutory time limits.

Where it is appropriate to the student's age and level of understanding, the student will also attend any consideration meeting and will be enabled to make a representation on their own behalf, if they desire to do so.

The Governing Body will consider the reinstatement of a suspended or excluded student, where:

- The exclusion is permanent.
- The suspension is fixed period and would bring the student's total number of suspended school days to more than 15 in any given term.

The suspension or exclusion would result in the student missing a public examination.

In the case of a suspension where the student's total number of suspended days is more than 5 but less than 16 school days within a term, if parents make representations, the Governing Body will consider suspensions within 50 school days of receiving the notice of suspension. In the absence of any representations from parents, the Governing Body will consider the reinstatement on their own.

Where a suspension will take a student's total number of school days out of school above five but less than 15 for the term, and parents have not requested a Governing Body meeting, the

Governing Body will not be required to consider the student's reinstatement, but it will have the power to do so if it deems it appropriate.

Where a suspension will not bring a student's total number of days of suspension or permanent exclusion to more than five days in a term, the Governing Body will consider all representations made by parents; however, the board cannot direct the reinstatement of the student, and it is not required to arrange a meeting with parents.

Where suspension or exclusion would result in a student missing a public examination, the Governing Body will consider the suspension or exclusion before the test to decide whether the student should be reinstated in time to take the examination.

If it is not practicable for a sufficient number of governors to consider the decision before the examination, a smaller sub-committee will consider the suspension or exclusion and decide whether or not to reinstate the student.

In light of the above, the Governing Body will also consider whether it would be appropriate to allow the suspended or excluded student to enter the premises to take the examination.

When considering the reinstatement of a student, the Governing Body will:

- Only discuss the suspension or exclusion with the parties present at the meeting.
- Ask for any written evidence prior to the meeting.
- Circulate any written evidence and information to all parties, at least five school days in advance of the meeting.
- Allow students and parents to be accompanied by a person of their choice to the meeting.
- Consider what reasonable adjustments need to be made to support the attendance and contribution of parties at the meeting.
- Identify the steps needed to enable and encourage the suspended or excluded student to attend the meeting and speak on their behalf, or how they may contribute personal views by other means if attendance is not possible.
- Consider the interests and circumstances of the student, including the grounds for suspension or exclusion.

12. Reaching a decision

After considering suspensions and exclusions, the Governing Body will either:

- Decline to reinstate the student.
- Direct the reinstatement of the student immediately, or on a specified date.

If reinstatement would make no practical difference, e.g. if the student has already returned to school following a suspension or the parents make clear they do not want their child reinstated, the Governing Body will still consider whether the student should be officially

reinstated, and whether the Headteacher's decision to suspend or exclude the student was fair, lawful and proportionate, based on the evidence presented.

The Governing Body will apply the civil standard of proof when responding to the acts relating to a suspension or exclusion, i.e. that on the 'balance of probabilities' it is more likely than not that the facts are true.

To reach a decision, the Governing Body will:

- Identify the steps they intend to take to ensure that all parties involved will have the opportunity to participate and present their views.
- Ensure that minutes are taken of the meeting as a record of the evidence that was considered.
- Ask all parties to withdraw from the meeting before concluding their decision.
- Consider whether the suspension or exclusion of the student was lawful, proportionate and fair, taking into account the Headteacher's legal duties and any evidence that was presented to the Governing Body in relation to the decision.
- Record the outcome of the decision on the student's educational records, along with copies, which will be kept for at least six months.
- Make a note of their findings, where they have considered a suspension or exclusion but cannot reinstate the student.

13. Notification of considered suspensions and exclusions

The Governing Body will notify the parents of the suspended or excluded student, the Headteacher, and the LA of their decision following the consideration of a suspension or exclusion, in writing and without delay.

In the case of exclusion, where the Governing Body decides not to reinstate the student, they will notify the parents:

- That the exclusion is permanent.
- Of their right for it to be reviewed by an independent review panel.
- Of the date by which an application for review must be made.
- Of the name and address of whom the review application should be submitted to.
- That any application should set out the grounds on which it is being made and that, where appropriate, this should include reference to how a student's SEND is considered relevant to the exclusion.
- That, regardless of whether a student has been identified as having SEND, the parents have a right to require the Governing Body to ensure a SEND expert attends the review.
- Of the role of the SEND expert that will attend the review, and that the parents will not be charged for this.

- That they are required to make it clear if they wish for a SEND expert to attend the review.
- That they may appoint someone at their own expense to make representations to the panel.

The Governing Body will also notify parents that, if they believe a suspension or exclusion has been issued as a result of discrimination, then they are required to make a claim under the Equality Act 2010 to the First-tier Tribunal (SEND), and that this should be within six months of when the discrimination allegedly took place.

After any conclusion, the Governing Body will notify the parents, and all other parties involved, of the decision that was made and the reasoning for this, in sufficient detail.

14. Removing excluded students from the school register

The Headteacher will remove students from the school register if:

- 15 school days have passed since the parents were notified of the Governing Body's decision not to reinstate the student and no application for an independent panel review has been received.
- The parents have stated in writing that they will not be applying for an independent panel review following an exclusion.

If an application for an independent panel review has been made within 15 school days, the Headteacher will wait until the review has been determined, or abandoned, and until the Governing Body has completed any reconsideration that the panel recommended or directed it to carry out, before removing the student from the school register.

If a student's name is to be removed from the register, the Headteacher will make a return to the LA, which will include:

- All the particulars which were entered in the register.
- The address of any parent with whom the student normally resides.
- The grounds upon which the student's name is to be removed from the register.

Any return to the LA will be made as soon as the grounds for removal are met and no later than the date in which the student's name was removed.

If a student's name has been removed from the register and a discrimination claim is made, the student may be reinstated following a decision made by the First-tier Tribunal (SEND) or County Court.

Whilst a student's name remains on the admissions register, the appropriate code will be used to mark the student's attendance:

- Code B: Education off-site

- Code D: Dual registration

15. Independent review panel

The LA will review the Governing Body's decision not to reinstate an excluded student if the parents submit their application for this within the required time frame.

The LA will constitute an independent review panel of three or five members that represent the following categories:

- A lay member to chair the panel. This individual will not have worked in any school in a paid capacity.
- A current or former school governor who has served for at least 12 consecutive months in the last 5 years.
- A Headteacher or individual who has been a Headteacher within the last 5 years.

Parents are required to submit their applications within:

- 15 school days of the Governing Body's notification of their decision.
- 15 school days of the final determination of a discriminatory claim made under the Equality Act 2010.

Any application made outside of the above timeframe will not be reviewed. Parents are able to request an independent panel review even if they did not make a case to, or attend, the Governing Body's initial consideration of the exclusion.

The LA will adhere to all statutory guidelines when conducting an independent panel review, as outlined in the DfE's statutory guidance.

16. Appointing a SEND expert

If requested by parents in their application for an independent review panel, the LA will appoint a SEND expert to attend the panel and covers the associated costs of this appointment. Parents have a right to request the attendance of a SEND expert at a review, regardless of whether the school recognises that their child has SEND.

The LA will make arrangements to indemnify the SEND expert against any legal costs and expenses reasonably incurred as a result of any decisions or actions connected to the review and which are taken in good faith.

An individual will not serve as a SEND expert if they have, or at any time have had, any connection with the LA, school, parents or student, or the incident leading to the exclusion, which might reasonably be taken to raise doubts about their ability to act impartially; however, an individual is not taken to have such a connection solely because they are an employee of the LA.

The SEND expert will be a professional with first-hand experience of the assessment and support of SEND, as well as an understanding of the legal requirements on schools in relation to SEND. Examples of suitable individuals might include educational psychologists, specialist SEND teachers, SENCOs and behaviour support teachers.

Recently retired individuals are not precluded from fulfilling this role; however, during interview, the LA will assess the knowledge of such individuals in order to ensure that they have a good understanding of current practice and the legal requirements on schools in relation to SEND.

Whilst individuals are not automatically taken to be partial simply because they are an employee of, or contracted by, the LA, they will not have had any previous involvement in the assessment or support of SEND for the excluded student, or siblings of the excluded student. The LA will request that prospective SEND experts declare any conflict of interest at the earliest opportunity.

The final decision on the appointment of a SEND expert is for the LA to make, but it will take reasonable steps to ensure that parents have confidence in the impartiality and capability of the SEND expert. Where possible, this will include offering parents a choice of SEND expert. In order to meet its duties within the statutory time frame, the LA will consider maintaining a list of individuals capable of performing the role of SEND expert in advance of a request.

The LA will determine the amount of any payment in relation to the appointment of the SEND expert, such as financial loss, travel and subsistence allowances.

17. The role of a SEND expert

The SEND expert's role is analogous to an expert witness, providing (orally and/or written) impartial advice to the panel on how SEND might be relevant to the exclusion. The SEND expert will base their advice on the evidence provided to the panel. The SEND expert's role does not include making an assessment of the student's SEND.

The focus of the SEND expert's advice will be on whether the school's policies which relate to SEND, or the application of these policies in relation to the excluded student, were legal, reasonable and procedurally fair. If the SEND expert believes that this was not the case, they will, where possible, advise the panel on the possible contribution this could have made to the circumstances of the student's exclusion.

Where the school does not recognise that a student has SEND, the SEND expert will advise the panel on whether they believe the school acted in a legal, reasonable and procedurally fair way with respect to the identification of any SEND that the student may potentially have, and any contribution that this could have made to the circumstances of the student's exclusion.

The SEND expert will not criticise a school's policies or actions simply because they believe a different approach should have been followed or because another school might have taken a different approach.

18. Appointing a clerk

The LA will decide whether to appoint a clerk to the independent review panel, or to make alternative arrangements to administer the panel.

Where a clerk is appointed, the LA will ensure that the clerk did not serve as clerk to the Governing Body when the decision was made not to reinstate the student.

19. The role of a clerk

The clerk's role is to provide advice to the panel and parties to the review on procedure, law and statutory guidance on exclusions.

The clerk will:

- Identify, in advance of the meeting, whether the excluded student wishes to attend the panel hearing, taking reasonable steps to enable the student to feedback their views, irrespective of their attendance.
- Identify, in advance of the meeting, whether any alleged victims of the incident leading up to the exclusion wish to attend the panel hearing, taking reasonable steps to enable them to feedback their views, irrespective of their attendance.
- Ensure that the panel can hear from any witnesses to the incident leading to the exclusion, taking into account the fact that some of these people may be students at the school. Students under 18 will not be allowed to appear in person without parental consent.
- Inform the parents, Headteacher and Governing Body that they are entitled to make oral and written representations to the panel, attend the hearing, and be represented.
- Ensure that all parties are:
 - Provided with copies of relevant papers at least five school days before the review, notifying the panel if any requested documents have not been provided in case the panel wishes to adjourn until a later date.
 - Informed about who is attending the meeting, and what their roles are.
- Attend the review and ensure that minutes are produced in accordance with instructions from the independent review panel.

Where a clerk is not appointed, the LA will undertake the functions outlined above.

20. The duties of the independent review panel

The role of the panel is to review the Governing Body's decision not to reinstate an excluded student. In reviewing the decision, the panel will consider the interests and circumstances of

the excluded student, including the circumstances in which the student was excluded, and have regard to the interests of other students and people working at the school. The panel will apply the civil standard of proof, rather than the criminal standard of 'beyond reasonable doubt'.

Following the review, the panel will do one of the following:

- Uphold the decision.
- Recommend that the Governing Body reconsiders reinstatement.
- Quash the decision and direct that the Governing Body reconsiders reinstatement.

The panel's decision does not have to be unanimous and can be decided by a majority vote. It is binding on the student, parents, Governing Body, Headteacher and LA.

21. Reconsidering reinstatement following a review

Where the independent review panel instructs the Governing Body to reconsider their decision not to reinstate a student, they will do so within 10 school days of being given notice of the review panel's decision.

The school is aware that if, following an instruction to reconsider, the Governing Body does not offer to reinstate the student, then the school will be required to make a payment of £4,000 directly to the LA area in which the school is located.

Where the independent review panel recommends that the Governing Body should reconsider their decision not to reinstate a student, they will do so within 10 school days of being given notice of the review panel's decision. The school is aware that if, following a recommendation to reconsider, the Governing Body does not offer to reinstate the student, it will not be subject to a financial adjustment. If, following reconsideration, the Governing Body offers to reinstate the student, but the parents decline, no adjustment will be made to the school's budget.

Following reconsideration, the Governing Body will notify the parents, Headteacher and LA of their reconsidered decision and the reasons for this.

22. Criminal investigations

The Headteacher will not postpone taking a decision to suspend or exclude a student due to a police investigation being underway, or any criminal proceedings that are in place.

Particular consideration will be given by the Headteacher when deciding to suspend or exclude a student where evidence is limited by a police investigation, to ensure that any decision made is fair and reasonable.

If the Governing Body is required to consider the Headteacher's decision in these circumstances, they will not postpone the meeting and will make a decision based on the evidence available.

23. Training requirements

The LA will ensure that all independent review panel members and clerks have received training within the two years prior to the date of the review. Training will cover:

- The requirements of the legislation, regulations and statutory guidance governing suspensions and exclusions.
- The need for the panel to observe procedural fairness and the rules of natural justice.
- The role of the chair of a review panel.
- The role of the clerk to a review panel.
- The duties of Headteachers, Governing Bodies and the panel under the Equality Act 2010.
- The effect of section 6 of the Human Rights Act 1998 and the need to act in a manner compatible with human rights protected by that Act.

Clerks will also have an up-to-date understanding on developments in case law which are relevant to suspension and exclusion.

24. Using data

The Headteacher will ensure that all data regarding suspensions and exclusions is collected and provided to the Governing Body on a termly basis. The Governing Body will review this data regularly in order to:

- Consider the level of student moves and the characteristics of students who are moving on any permanent exclusions to ensure that this is only being used as a last resort.
- Gather information on students who are taken off the roll and those who are on the roll but attending education off-site.
- Consider the effectiveness and consistency in implementing the Behaviour Policy.
- Understand any variations in the rolling average of permanent exclusions to ensure they are only used when necessary.
- Understand the characteristics of suspended and excluded students and evaluate equality considerations.
- Gather information on where students are receiving repeat suspensions.
- Evaluate interventions in place to support students at risk of suspension and exclusion, including where there are patterns which may indicate that certain policies and support measures are or are not working.

- Analysing whether the placements of students directed off-site into alternative provision are reviewed at sufficient intervals to assure that the education is achieving its objectives.

25. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher in conjunction with the Governing Body. The next scheduled review date for this policy is September 2023.

All members of staff will be required to familiarise themselves with this policy as part of their induction programme.

26. Complaints

Any dissatisfaction regarding the implementation of this Suspension and Exclusions Policy should be addressed in accordance with the school's Complaints Policy.

Flowchart for reviewing the Headteacher's suspension or exclusion decision

